



March 4, 2014

RE: Raised Bill Nos. 5371, 5372 and 5373

Dear Members of the Program Review and Investigations Committee:

We are Traci Cipriano (Director of Professional Affairs), and Barbara Bunk (President) of the the Connecticut Psychological Association (CPA). CPA **supports R.B. Nos. 5371, 5372, 5373 and 5374.**

Raised Bill Nos. 5371 and 5374 address the great need for access to substance abuse treatment by insured youth, as well as the issue of continuity of care for youths aging out of the state care system. This Committee issued a report which was approved in December 18, 2012, addressing the tremendous inadequacy of substance abuse treatment options for Connecticut's insured youth. In addition, Connecticut's Healthcare Advocate, Attorney Victoria Veltri, released a report on January 2, 2013, which also highlights problems within the system. The mental health and well-being of our youth and those aging out of state services should be a top priority; early intervention through access to appropriate mental health services leads to the best outcomes and increases the likelihood that those youth in need of services will later lead healthy, productive lives.

Raised Bill No. 5372, establishes a Connecticut Alcohol and Drug Policy Council, as well as membership criteria. We note that, other than the Commissioner of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, there is no other seat for a mental health professional on this council. Considering the tasks set forth in the proposed bill (reviewing policies and practices concerning substance abuse treatment and prevention), we recommend adding a seat for at least one additional mental health professional, such as a clinical or counseling psychologist (Ph.D., Psy.D, or Ed.D).

Raised Bill No. 5373, addresses reporting requirements of certain data by managed care organizations and health insurance companies to the Insurance Department. The provisions of RB 5373 increase transparency related to coverage decisions and complaints, which will facilitate evaluation of the review process, including compliance with federal parity law, which requires equal treatment of medical and behavioral health providers and conditions, as well as network adequacy.